

DATE: 13TH APRIL, 2017

MAUNDY THURSDAY

THEME: WE ARE EUCHARISTIC PEOPLE

God's relationship with his people has always been understood in the context of the Covenant: "You SHALL be my people and I will be your God" One symbolic manifestation of this covenant in the life of the Ancient Israel is the Passover Feast which marks their deliverance from the home of slavery. So important was it that in establishing the Passover, God had to lay down the specifics:

- An unblemished lamb, a year old male
- To be slaughtered at twilight
- Blood smeared on the door posts
- Eat it with loins girded, sandals on feet, staff in hand, and in a hurried manner
- To be kept as a day of remembrance

But Israel was unfaithful to the terms of that covenant. At the height of this infidelity, God promised a new covenant. “Behold, the days are coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant I made with their fathers in Egypt... for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more.” (Jer. 31:31-34).

It is within the context of this unique event of the Passover that Christ established the New Covenant made in his blood. This covenant is fully expressed in the Holy Eucharist. Just as in ancient Passover:

- A lamb is offered; today the Lamb of God offers himself and gives himself to be eaten.
- The Lamb is offered at twilight; JESUS offers himself at the twilight of our lives

condemned to death by sin (Rom. 6:23)

- The blood was smeared at the door posts to preserve the life of the people of Israel; even so our lips are 'purpled by the blood' of Jesus that we may have life (John 6:53).
- The loins are girded, sandals are worn, and staff in hand; more so are dirty feet washed leading to this table of the Lord.
- It is celebrated as a remembrance from generation to generation, even more so is the new done, "in memory of me".

The Eucharist, therefore, is both a sacrifice and a meal. But in all these, the old is only a shadow of the new.

But the Eucharist is also a Sacrament, "an outward sign of inward grace ordained by Jesus through which life is given to our

souls.” It is a Sacrament of love, a love that expresses itself in action of self-giving and service. In instituting The Eucharist, Christ gave himself. We are therefore invited to become what we eat by imitating Christ in giving ourselves to our brothers and sisters, even to the point of washing their feet. It takes humility, and more importantly, and encounter with Jesus himself.

Peace Be With You!